

JIHADI-SALAFISM

**A framework for understanding why Muslims accept the
jihadi-Salafists' call for Jihad**

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Preface

Completing the work with this master thesis has, indeed, been a long and winding road. When by chance and convenience I began my political science studies at Østfold College, after returning from jazz studies in the USA, I had no intention of continuing my studies on the Masters level. However, years later, on the beautiful sunny morning of Friday the 21st of April I consider my work done. It is no secret that I at times have found the requirements and work load in this process to be overwhelming; I have more than once felt the urge to pack my guitar and set sail away from it all. Looking back though the work has indeed been a most exciting journey, intellectually challenging as well as personally enlightening.

The seeds of the thesis' subject were sown during a journey to the Middle-East, including the Gaza strip in the beginning of the 1990s. In the process of arriving at a viable perspective and theoretical framework, Knut Midgaard's lectures in STV 4103 game-, debate- and negotiations theory as well as his and Bjørn Erik Rasch's STV 4106 political psychology lectures at the Department of Political Science, University of Oslo during the spring and autumn of 2004 has been decisive. Not only was I stripped of my unfounded ill will towards game theory and rational choice models but also introduced to the brilliant work of Jon Elster which the following framework owes a great deal to.

Further, I want to thank my supervisors Tore Nyhamar (05 / S -06) and Petter Nesser (05 / S-06) at Norwegian Defense Research Establishment for valuable discussions, structural and methodological guidance and counseling. Nesser, my main adviser in empirical questions has supplied invaluable assistance in the search for literature on the jihadi-Salafists. This said, any flaws - methodological, empirical or theoretical are my own responsibility.

Finally, I want to thank my parents for financial assistance, my friend, sweetheart and antagonist Jeanette and of course my beloved children.

Halden, April 2006

Knut Marcus Røsnæs

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1. Introduction

In this thesis I want to understand why people are drawn to violent Islamist groups. I will explore mechanisms¹ that might radicalize Muslims and offer a framework, in which the socio-economic conditions² in the Middle East are the triggering factor.

In the following I will focus on jihadi-Salafists; including, but not limited to the group known as al-Qaida. This thesis recognizes jihadi-Salafists as individuals who maintain a literal interpretation of the sacred Islamic texts and champion a rearrangement of society along the lines of Muhammad's medieval umma. These incentives are shared by the Salafi movement as a whole, both radicals and moderates, including i.a. the Saudi-Arabian Wahhabi School and the Muslim Brotherhood. The jihadi-Salafists do however distinguish themselves by a seemingly radical reworking of the justification and application of the doctrine of jihad. In this context jihad denotes acts of violence justified by reference to Islamic principles.

Even though the number of people turning to such extremities is relatively small, suicide attacks and the spearhead of the jihadi-Salafists, Osama bin Laden seem to have mass support. The Strategic Survey 2003/04 maintains that al-Qaida have regrouped and have funding and 18 000 possible activists available. It is probable that the ongoing war in Iraq have increased this number. Sverre Lodgaard (2004) points to an escalating development, and maintains that international terrorism has increased heavily since President George Bush declared war on terrorism.

The thesis' perspective stems from the conviction that the structural conditions in a given society are decisive in the propagation of radical oppositional groups.

¹ understood as "[...] specific causal pattern[s] that can be recognized after the event, but rarely foreseen" (Elster 1993: 3),

² In what follows socio-economic conditions and structural conditions will be used interchangeably.

2. Main Approach

The main approach will be to *map psychological mechanisms which might be effective in the process of making individuals receptive to the jihadi-Salafi ideology.*

Theories of political psychology view human behavior as a product of preceding experiences and structural conditions. In other words, how a person behaves is conditioned by the psychological effects of his or her previous experiences. My hypothesis is that the socio-economic conditions in the Middle East *predispose* Muslims to the jihadi-Salafi ideology.

I will pursue this by employing four psychological mechanisms: *adaptive preference formation, wishful thinking, feeling of resentment, inferential errors* and the *process of symbolization*. All of these mechanisms are known to be caused by certain structural conditions. The method rests on the notion that the possible effects of these mechanisms correspond with the sentiments advocated by the jihadi-Salafists.

The psychological mechanism known as the *sour grapes syndrome* will serve to illustrate the effect of the socio-economic conditions in the Middle East. In the renowned fable of Jean de La Fontaine, a fox decides that the grapes he can not reach are sour and thus not worth having. In the current context I will argue that some of the aversion towards Western style government and social order, stems from this mechanism; as the western world's standard of living and individual freedom appear to be unattainable to people living in many Muslim countries, they react by opposing these values. As Jason Burke puts it:

"[...] the experiences of a 17-year-old Pakistani middle-class youth, torn between the mullah and the MTV. If he accepts his desire to be part of the Westernized world he will have to address the fact that he is unlikely ever to enjoy anything more than an ersatz, inferior version of the 'Western' life enjoyed by his equivalent in London or Los Angeles. His clothes will never be as up to date, his skin will never be the right color, his chances of pre-

marital sex will always be infinitesimally lower. An alternative course is to reject the West and all it stands for in favor of the affirming, empowering certainties of radical Islam” (Burke 2003: 246).

Due to the extreme character of the jihadi-Salafists actions and their claim that their actions are sanctioned and prescribed by Allah, *instrumental religion* is included as the model’s third mechanism.

The perspective of an instrumental utilization of Islam is theoretical; I find it to be a viable conceptualization in the context of this project. Whether or not the jihadi-Salafists developed their ideology *intentionally* to lure Muslims to the jihad, or they *actually believe* their school of Islam is the only legitimate, true version of Allah’s will, is beyond the scope of this project. The behavioral pattern and history of top al-Qaida members, their communiqués and lack of narcissism (Sageman 2004: 172) as well as al-Qaida’s diametrically different structure and operational pattern compared to other “terrorist” leaders and organizations, does however indicate *strong* religious incentives.

2.1 Topical perspective

The topical perspective of human behavior views it through the grid of *rational choice theory*. “This perspective assumes individuals to make a cost-benefit analysis of all available courses of action with respect to their consequences for the realization of the individual’s preferences” (Andeweg 2003: 26). This is an “ideal-type” definition of human behavior and it is recognized that most humans do not hold the cognitive capacities this perspective assumes. However as “on average, people behave ‘as if’ they are rational actors” (Andeweg 2003: 26), it is an adequate method to conceptualize human behavior. The rational choice perspective on human behavior can schematically be outlined like this:

Stage: 1

Formative period

Psychological effects of experience.



Stage: 2

Beliefs & Desires



Stage: 3

Motivation



Behavior

Figure 2.1 Tentative model of human behavior

According to this model, human action is viewed as a product of a tripartite process initiated by a formative period in which the psychological effects of experience affect an individual's beliefs and desires.

Consequently these desires motivate a person to behave in a certain way. This is behavior commonly referred to as *maximizing behavior*.

The figure indicates a sequential process, and is a simplified illustration of the complex process of human behavior. Assessing a person's incentives is much

like peeling an onion; provided the person is in good health and not suffering from any mental disorder, our experiences, the structural conditions one faces and the psychological effects of these affect our beliefs and desires continuously. The figure is thus a snapshot of the behavioral process, an accurate representation of the process would require the inclusion of recurring psychological effects.

The main focus of this project is on the formative period (figure 2.1.) This is where incentives are created. I believe that psychological mechanisms might help explain why Muslims traveled to the camps in Afghanistan in the 1980s and 1990s, sometimes begging for the chance to become Martyrs³, and why Muslims go to Iraq to wage holy war today.

Which mechanisms spur people to engage in religious violence?

This is the overall question of this project, and even though I hope to be able to offer a viable framework for understanding this, it will not cover all aspects of the phenomenon. However, I believe that the three mechanisms included:

psychological -, symbolization and the instrumental use of religion are vital. The first two are triggered by socio-economic conditions, while the third the collective Islamic legacy, and thus they have the potential for affecting the entire Middle Eastern Muslim population.

First, I argue that the psychological mechanisms *adaptive preference formation*, *feeling of resentment*, *wishful thinking* and *inferential errors*, outlined in chapter 6.1., form the necessary condition in which the other mechanisms operate.

These psychological effects predispose individuals to the jihadi-Salafi ideology.

³ Martyr: a Muslim who dies fighting in the name of Allah. There is disagreement among Islamic scholars whether or not people who carry out suicide missions should be exalted to martyrs. The jihadi-Salafists (among others) do however use this method extensively and martyrize these individuals. As suicide is forbidden according to the Qur'an this is however arguably due to a convenient exegesis (refer section 5.3.) Bernhard Lewis points in the same direction when he claims that "Der Koran kennt keine selbstmordattentate" (Die Zeit 2004)

The additional mechanisms which will be included are:

- **Instrumental use of religion**

I intend to explore the notion of the jihadi-Salafi ideology as a blend of amendments to, and convenient exegesis of the Islamic sacred texts. One can justly call the attention to the fact that all religious thought is subject to, and a product of, exegesis and thus render this mechanism void. It is further no criterion for religious belief to be logically coherent, rather the opposite one might argue. I will, however, venture to say that this particular strand of Islamism has clear indications of being instrumentally utilized in order to promote their political agenda. This rests on the fact that they on the one hand claim to be maintaining the pure version of the Islamic faith, untampered by exegesis; on the other they exercise great inventiveness in order to i.a. justify the application of the doctrine of jihad (refer section 5.3). Reversing the analogy of Marx who rendered religion as the opium of the Masses I will assert that the jihadi-Salafist have made religion the amphetamine of the masses.

- **Symbolization**

The process of symbolization is, as the psychological mechanisms are, triggered by socio-economic conditions and is included primarily to conceptualize the aversion towards the west as expressed by the jihadi-Salafists.

2.2 Scope of the project - limitations

The mechanisms included in the project are, as stated above, by no means a complete list of mechanisms. Obviously, as in all politics - secular or religious, general propagandistic instruments are heavily involved in the recruitment process. As Marty and Scott Appleby point out:

“[Islamists are] *manipulative* champions of a vision of religious dogma which promises spectacular improvements in the lives of ordinary people [.....]” ([my italics]quoted in Haynes 1998: 129)

Further, as i.a. Jon Elster (Elster: 2004) demonstrates, the field of social psychology will also be vital for insights into the motivations of jihadi-Salafists. Both social-categorization- and social-identity theories, group- and peer pressure are relevant for understanding the attraction of jihadi-Salafism. Aristotle points to the relevance of social psychology by stating:

“in battle, most soldiers refrain from cowardly behavior because of the fear of being punished by their superiors, whereas others are held in check by the shame they would feel before their peers” (quoted in Elster 2004: 12).

These factors have been thoroughly assessed previously, i.a in Sageman (2004), and it is recognized that they are decisive in the radicalization process. I will however argue that before a person is subject to e.g. group- and peer pressure he has been affected by psychological mechanisms (and the process of symbolization) triggered by the structural conditions in the society he lives. I.e. his previous experiences and the psychological effects of these will be decisive regarding how his social network will affect him.

Including social-categorization- and identity- theories in the current thesis' structuralist perspective, a tentative hypothesis will thus be:

Psychological mechanisms triggered by structural conditions predispose Muslims to the jihadi-Salafi ideology; their acceptance of the call for jihad is conditioned by their social network and relations.

Sageman (2004) has convincingly shown the significance of i.a. social networks when people accept the jihadi-Salafists call for jihad.

I do, however, believe that without the existence of certain structural conditions the validity of group- and peer pressure is void as the group would not hold the incentives in question.

My reading of Sageman supports this notion:

“[...] those who sympathize and may want to participate in the jihad. This much larger disconnected and unorganized network consists of small cliques and singletons who want to join the jihad but have not been able to do so. This pool of potential candidates may increase or decrease according to sociopolitical events in the world.” (Sageman 2004: 172)

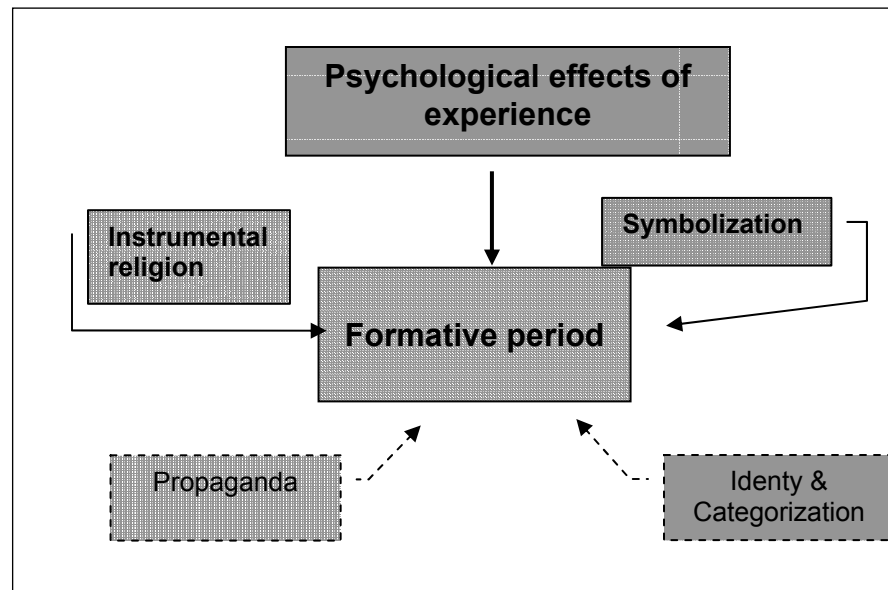
This project will thus suggest a possible framework for understanding why Muslims respond to this kind of group- and peer pressure. As Sageman acknowledges, the structural conditions in the Middle East are decisive in this respect. In what follows, I hope to be able to substantiate their significance in the forming of incentives making Muslims receptive to the Jihadi-Salafi ideology.

With reference to the foregoing observations I assume that the thesis' omission of individual level empirical data is justified.

2.3 Outline of behavioral incentives

Including the additional mechanisms in the previously sketched figure, the broader picture will be as follows:

Stage: 1



Stage: 2



Stage: 3

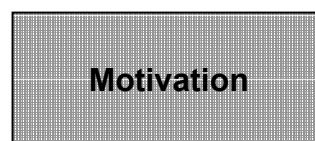


Figure 2.2 Schematic outline of behavioral incentives

This figure locates the topical mechanisms around the formative period. Further it suggests that the psychological mechanisms, as mentioned above, form the necessary condition in which the other mechanisms operate.

3. Elaborating the mechanisms

My hypothesis is that the psychological mechanisms listed on page 10 are essential when explaining the attraction of the jihadi-Salafi ideology. I will argue that these are a condition for the other two mechanisms to be fully operational. The *process of symbolization* will be viewed as both an autodynamic process triggered by socio-economic factors as well as a process utilized by the jihadi-Salafists. The *instrumental utilization of religion* will explore if, how and, possibly, to what degree the jihadi-Salafists are utilizing and adapting the Islamic faith in order to further their political agenda. Building on the considerations on page 11, I recognize that the nature of religion and religious belief per se will make it difficult to draw conclusions in these matters. On the other hand I believe that including this mechanism will bring further insights into why Muslims accept the jihadi-Salafists call for jihad.

In Johan Galtungs words one could say that the jihadi-Salafi ideologists stir up a “pot of soup”⁴ in order to attract followers.

Jason Burke points in the same direction when characterizing the most influential contributor to the jihadi-Salafist branch of Islamic militancy, Abdullah Azzam:

“Azzam’s writings are not political tracts, or even arguments, but exhortations to violence” (Burke 2003: 78).

Developing the main approach the projects aim will be to answer the following questions:

⁴ In a lecture given at UIO 14.02.03 the US foreign policy was parabled as a pot of soup in which aims, desires and excuses were stirred together.

- *What role do psychological mechanisms play in making people receptive to the jihadi-Salafi ideology?*

As the preceding section indicates, I allege that the psychological mechanisms are a prerequisite in order to make the other two mechanisms i.e. *the process of symbolization* and *the instrumental use of Islam* operational. I will substantiate this notion by examining the socio-economic conditions in the Muslim world, limited to the Middle East.

Harold D. Lasswells theory of symbolization will be offered as a contributing factor explaining the jihadi-Salafists force of attraction:

- *Is the process of symbolization a contributing factor in the process of making Muslims receptive to the jihadi-Salafi ideology?*

The theory put forth by Harold D. Lasswell in *Psychopathology and Politics* published in 1930 will serve two purposes. First, it will help conceptualize the aversion felt by the jihadi-Salafists towards the “West”, second, it might shed light on how this process utilized by jihadi-Salafi leaders such as Sayyid Qutb, Abdullah Azzam, Ayman Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden. This is an elaboration of the Lasswellian idealtype of the process of symbolization which is an autodynamic mechanism triggered by socio-economic factors.

Finally, the jihadi-Salafists’ possible instrumental use of religion is examined:

- *Is Islam utilized instrumentally by the jihadi-Salafists?*

I will assess this question by examining the radical interpretations and amendments of important jihadi-Salafi ideologues (refer section 4).

A closer examination of all the topical mechanisms is found in section 6.

4. Islamism

The following provides a background for understanding the emergence of jihadi-Salafism and the thesis' perspective of their instrumental use of religion.

The emergence of modern Islamism (political Islam) is generally considered as coinciding with the foundation of the Muslim Brotherhood by the Egyptian Hassan al-Banna in 1928. Islamism and its revivalist movements however, have a long tradition within Islam starting off with the Shia faction. This group broke away from the traditional school in 661 after the assassination of the fourth caliph Ali, after a dispute over the succession to Muhammad, hence the literal translation of Shiite, *Ali's party*.

Jihadi-Salafism emerged as a political ideology during the Afghan war. It is an ideology steeped in a religious discourse and worldview, but as their aim is clearly political, *the creation of a society governed according to the Islamic law, al-Sha'ria*, I find it adequate to refer to it as a political ideology.

This view is however *not* shared by the jihadi-Salafists, as they do not separate religion from politics: Islam is all encompassing, it regulates all aspects of human life and thus also politics. Man-made laws are un-Islamic, kufr, and thus forbidden.

Before turning to jihadi-Salafism I will elaborate on the concept of Islamism based on Sami Zubaida (2000). He operates with the following ideal types of Islamism:

Conservative Islamism

This strand pursue 'regular' conservative values as property, family and discipline through *regular political channels*. By means of governmental lobbying and

lawmaking they call for the application of the Islamic law, al-Sha'ria. Although found throughout the Muslim world, the Saudi establishment and its Wahhabi strand can serve to exemplify this type.

Political Islamism

The political Islamists work for social, political and religious reforms in societies that are based on Islam and can be exemplified by the Iranian revolutionaries such as Sharia'ti, Talanghani, and an offshoot of the Egyptian Muslim Brethren, al-Wasat (the center).

“Al Wasat’s program was based on civil liberties, human rights, national unity and so on and thus departed from the ideology of the Brothers in subscribing, without ambiguity, to Western principles of democracy” (Kepel 2004: 296)

Even though still prohibited, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood is generally (by 2006) classified as political Islamists. Since the 1980s they have followed a non-violence stance and representatives with ties to the brotherhood won a considerable amount of seats during the elections in 2005.

Radical Islamism

In general the radical Islamists are in line with the conservatives insofar as the implication of the Islamic law, al-Sha'ria. They do however differ by means of method; as they hold the political establishment to be un-Islamic and impious, they work for a transformation of society by means of militancy. These groups are in large measures inspired by the writings of the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb.

As Thomas Hegghammer points out regarding militant Islamists, figure 4.1 the different strands of Islamism can be thought of as corners in a triangle, the actual groups, movements etc. are located along the most applicable continuum.

4.1 Militant Islamism

Militant Islamism is a vast and disparate mixture of groups with varying motives, methods and ideologies. Following Hegghammer (forthcoming), three types of militant Islamism are recognized:

Socio- revolutionary

These groups are fuelled by socio-economic grievances and the national elites' failed attempts to deal with these. The first socio-revolutionary groups emerged in Egypt in the 1970s. Inspired by the writings of Sayyid Qutb these groups' violent actions, culminating with the assassination of President Anwar Sadat in October 1981, became a serious threat to the political stability. Their jihad is fought to create an Islamic society governed according to the law of God, al-Sha'ria.

Nationalist-separatist

The nationalist-separatist groups emerged in Palestine and Lebanon in the 1980s. As opposed to the socio-revolutionary, these groups do not aim at complete transformation of society; their jihad is a resistance towards Israeli occupation of Palestine and Southern Lebanon. The founders of the first of these groups *the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)*, *Harakat al-Jihad al-Islami fi-l-Falastin* were inspired by the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran. In the late 1970 Sheikh Ahmed Yassin's *Hamas*, *Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiyya*, was established as a social institution. Their military operations did not commence before the 1987 intifada.

During the 1980s the Shiite Hezbollah organization employed guerilla tactics and executed spectacular operations, i.a. suicide missions in their struggle against the Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon.

In addition to their firm resistance toward Israel, their substantial social-measures have given both Hamas and Hezbollah substantial support among the Palestinian population in general. Consequently, Hamas won the majority of the votes in the January 2006, elections in the Palestinian territories.

These groups have focused on domestic targets, and they have deliberately distanced themselves from al-Qaida and other “global-jihadists”. It is thus vital to acknowledge the fact that these groups are locally oriented.

Global-jihadist

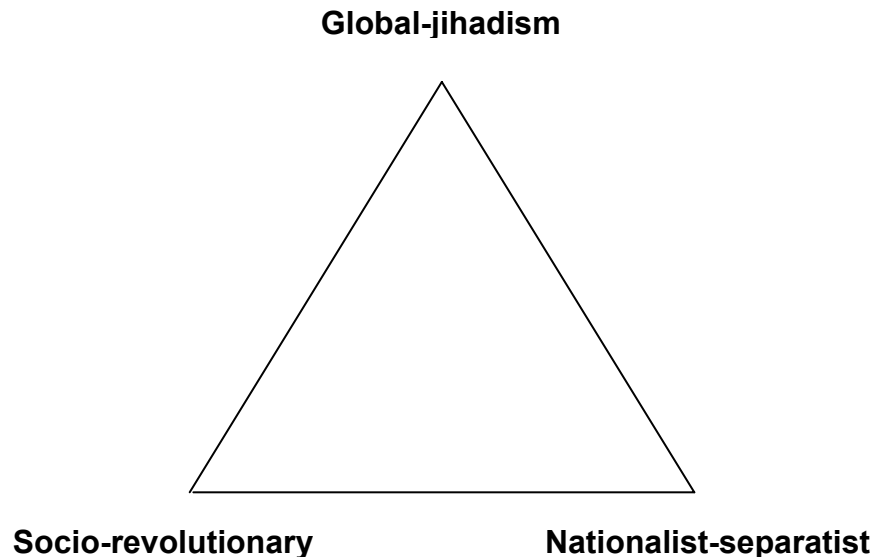
Hegghammer (forthcoming) points to three main reasons for the emergence of global-jihadism in the 1990s:

- **The hegemonic position of the USA after the collapse of the USSR**
- **The failure of local Islamist insurgencies**
- **A product of the ideological and social uniformity set in motion by the training camps in Afghanistan**

Being the most radical of the three, they are aimed at defeating the USA and their allies in order to restore the Islamic Caliphate.

Al-Qaida is arguably the primary global-jihadist group, it is a jihadi-Salafist group, but not all jihadi-Salafists are globally oriented. One can therefore assume that jihadi-Salafists are found within all three types of militant Islamist groups. The jihadi-Salafists are covered in more detail in section 4.3 ff.

These categories represent ideal-types and are best viewed as corners in a triangle. The different groups are positioned along the most applicable continuum:



(Hegghammer forthcoming)

Figure 4.1 Militant Islamism conceptualized

4.2 Ancestors

The following sections will cover some aspects of two ideologists working in highly different times, Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya in medieval Arabia, and Hassan al-Banna in turn-of-the-19th century Egypt.

They are both vital for insights into the ideology of jihadi-Salafist groups such as al-Qaida.

Taqi al-Din Ibn Taymiyya, 1263-1328

Taymiyya is considered the spiritual father of many of today's Islamist militants, including the jihadi-Salafist Osama bin Laden. Being the primary source of guidance for the Wahhabi school of the late 18th century Arabia he is also given credit for the conservatism, literalism and fundamentalism evident both in the Wahhabi school and the militant Islamism of today.

Taymiyya's times were marked by internal dispute and division. The rivalry among local caliphates had brought the Islamic community, the *Umma* into a state of diffusion and anxiety.

Muslim Arabia went through one of its hardest ordeals, including the onslaught of the horse riding forces of Genghis and Kublai Khan and 200 years of menacing by the Crusaders.

Taymiyya claimed that the troubles of the Umma were due to their apostasy, i.e. they had not followed the injunctions of the holy Qur'an. The remedy he prescribed was to bypass the adaptation of the sacred texts years of exegesis had brought and return to the genuine virtues of Islam.

This is the essence of the jihadi-Salafi ideology of today: as the Muslim regimes have strayed away from the true path of Islam they are attacked and humiliated by infidels.

The remedy is the still the same: establish a society modeled on the first Islamic community as established by the Prophet.

Hassan al-Banna, 1906-1949

The Egyptian Al-Banna's times were marked by similar upheavals as those of Taymiyya. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk abolished the Ottoman caliphate in 1922 and set up a secular Turkish nation-state. This was a huge blow for the literalist branch of the Muslim population. In 1922 Britain withdrew from Egypt, but by reserving the right to intervene in any matter affecting the British Empire, it left the post-colonial elites with limited autonomy. In 1928, fuelled by socio-economic

recession and demographic upheavals, Al-Banna, formerly educated as a school teacher, founded *Al-Ikwan Al-Moslemoon* i.e. the *Muslim Brotherhood*. It developed into a religio-political mass movement, which is still active, in Egypt and other countries in the Islamic world.

The *social-reformist* al-Banna became the Ikwan's first leader and murshid (spiritual guide).

As Taymiyya several hundred years earlier, the ideology of the Brotherhood composed of a return to the true Islamic values. The nationalist sentiments, including European-style legislation and system of government, would only make things worse for the disconcerted umma.

" [...] – the Brothers responded with a slogan that is still current in the Islamist movement: "The Koran is our constitution." Islam, for the Brothers, was a complete and total system, and there was no need to go looking for European values as a basis for social order. Everything was made clear in the Koran, whose moral principles, the Brothers claimed, were universal" (Kepel 2004:27).

4.3 Modern times

Aware of the problems following a broad generalization across the Muslim population, following Kepel (2004) it seems adequate to describe the Islamist revival beginning in the 1960s as a religious response to the prevailing nationalist sentiments.

Like their ancestors, the ideologists of the 1950s and 60s saw the nationalist government strategy as a dead-end and the solution were similar to their forefathers: implementation of the injunctions set forth in the Qur'an. Much of this antipathy stems from demographic upheavals and the unsuccessful efforts of the regimes in power to meet these challenges. As a consequence of their opposition towards the regimes, a great number of the Islamists were persecuted, jailed

without sentence and tortured. In all likelihood, this was a significant contribution in the radicalization of these individuals; many of these are today high-ranking members of al-Qaida and other militant groups.

The following section will deal with one of the most influential thinkers within modern Islamist militancy, the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb.

Sayyid Qutb

The following provides a background for the thesis' perspective of the jihadi-Salafists' instrumental use of Islam. I will focus on Qutb's reworking of the concept and justification of the doctrine of jihad.

Central in his adaptation is the reworking of the term *jahiliyya*. In its original meaning jahiliyya referred to the impious era before Muhammad's revelation of Islam, in which the Arabs had lived for centuries in a state of ignorance. Qutb's reworking was, seen through the lens of a modern political campaigner, a masterstroke. By denoting the post-colonial era as jahiliyya, he managed to consign the nationalist elites "metaphorically to the pre-Revelation abyss"(Kepel 2004: 25).

To stigmatize the elites even further he made use of the concepts created earlier by the Indian Sayyid Abdul Al'a (Maulana) Mawdudi: *sovereignty* (hakimiyya) and *adoration* (ouboudiyya). By applying these concepts he cleared the way for the dichotomization between the west and the true Islamic values as put forth in the Qur'an. The logic of this is quite straight forward and do not differ in any significant way from the early ideologists. It cements the idea of the Qur'an as the only source for guidance and the rhetorical force of this move is unprecedented; no less in the hands of the eloquent and charismatic public speaker Sayyid Qutb.

"When sovereignty is vested in an "idol," whether a nation, party, army, or people, and when this idol becomes the subject of mass adoration, [...] then evil, inequity, an falsehood reign. The result is anti-Islam, jahiliyya" (Kepel 2004: 26).

The conclusion will thus be: Allah is the only legitimate sovereign and the only one worthy of adoration. Contrary to the gradualist Mawdudi, Qutb spoke out for a clean break with the established order.

The consequences of Qutb defining his own times as jahiliyya were however not limited to this.

According to Islamic law and doctrine it implied that the nationalist regimes and their inhabitants no longer could be regarded as Muslims, they were *kufr* (impious). Consequently the Islamic doctrine of takfir i.e. excommunication would be applicable. It is a common but much disputed concept within Islamic doctrine. Qutb's application extinguishes itself as quite extreme:

- **Pronouncing someone as takfir is principally reserved for the ulema, it is a last resort used reluctantly.**
- **Qutb were not an alim and his judgment was universal, the only ones who escaped his kufr judgment was those following his command.**

The consequences for a person defined as kufr, are harsh:

[...] "one who is, or claims to be, a Muslim is declared to be impure: by takfir he is excommunicated in the eyes of the Community of the Faithful. [...] one who is impious to this extent can no longer benefit from the protection of law. According to the consecrated expression, "his blood is forfeit", and he is condemned to death" (Kepel 2004: 31).

In the final step of his radical interpretation Qutb rendered the kufr nationalists and everyone not intensely opposing them, *legitimate targets of Jihad*. In *Milestones*, by many considered to be a primary source of modern radical Islamism he puts forth the notion of a *vanguard* whose duty is to carry out the injunctions following this application.

"[...] a "vanguard" of "true Muslims" has to build itself up mentally and physically (militarily), to be able to launch an all out war on the kuffar. Because Muslims are in a state of weakness, the build up requires the "vanguard" to excommunicate the infidel society, emigrate and establish a true Islamic community based on the undistorted principles of Islam" (Nesser 2004: 22).

Qutb's reworking and justification of the jihadi doctrine is one of the most important elements of today's jihadi-Salafism and I will return to this in chapter 7.

4.4 Radical Islamist ideology

The following is a summary of significant social factors I believe to be vital in the understanding of the emergence and attraction of jihadi-Salafism.

"The radical Islamist movement itself, whose very existence had been unknown to all but a very few, was now associated with a revolution whose contours were vague but whose essential nature appeared to be as radical as it was virulently anti-Western" (Kepel 2004: 61).

Following the execution of Qutb in 1966, a slide of events significantly affected both the capability and the maneuvering space of the radical Islamists.

The historically severest blow to the Islamists was Atatürk's abolishment of the Caliphate March 3. 1924. The founding of the Muslim Brotherhood followed only a few years after this (1928). By the end of the 1960s the socio-economic and religio-political situation had deteriorated in such a way as to convert al-Banna's Islamic social-reformism into a radical extremist ideology.

The most significant singular event boosting radical Islamism was the Arab nationalists' defeat by Israel in 1967. This is considered a turning point.

The inability of the ruling nationalist elites to meet the needs of the general population and the strategy of banning the Islamists from the political scene backfired on the ruling elites. Repressing the Islamists only made their grassroots support stronger and their support was seen as recent as the 2005 Egyptian elections, in which representatives linked to the prohibited Brotherhood gained considerable support.

Radical Islamism is a vast and disparate conglomerate of ideologies, movements, groups, ideas and objectives. This project deals with one of the most extreme factions, *jihadi-Salafism*. Building on the ideas of Qutb and his predecessors, Abdullah Azzam, Osama bin Laden's lodestar, is regarded as the instigator of this extreme variant of Islamism.

Abdullah Azzam – modern Islamist militancy

In order to further substantiate the notion of the jihadi-Salafists' instrumental utilization of Islam I will assess the work of Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian university professor. He is among the most influential sources of modern Islamist militancy, including jihadi-Salafi ideology and Osama bin Laden.

Bin Laden studied at the Abd al-Aziz University in Jeddah, Saudi-Arabia, when Azzam and Sayyid Qutb's brother, Mohammed, were lecturing there. Later, bin Laden and Azzam teamed up in Pakistan and Afghanistan during the Afghan war. Azzam and bin Laden is said to have supplemented each other as bin Laden's energy, organizational and networking skills were given Islamic credentials through Azzam's profound Islamic knowledge, charisma and confidence. Bin Laden's entry into Jihadi-Salafism was as financier of the Afghan-Arabs during the Afghan war. He funded training camps, bunkers and safe-houses as well as being a reportedly fearless fighter. Later on, he and his now second in command Ayman al-Zawahiri, becomes central in the development of the *global jihadi-doctrine*.

In his work, building on the ideas of Taymiyya, Mawdudi, al-Banna and Qutb, he mixes the historical with the contemporary. This is most evident in his utilization

of Qutb's reworked concept of jihad and the notion of the Muslim vanguard. The latter is ascribed to sure 2:249 which refer to the tale of David defeating Goliath:

"Many a small army defeated a large army by Gods leave".⁵

This quotation is moreover frequently used by bin Laden. (Burke 2003:36)
As Qutb, Azzam believed that a small band of pious Muslims (members of their inner circles) would be necessary to guide the mislead Muslims back on the true path. Azzams call, as opposed to Qutb's, profited from being set forth in a much more favorable context, i.e. during the Afghan war. While Qutb's call failed to affect any significant number of individuals, except those of his inner circle, Azzam took the role as instigator of the substantial number of Afghan Arab volunteers. By the pen of Azzam, the Afghan veterans were eventually transformed into a mobile international jihadi strike force. This being his intention, it is disputed how well he succeeded. In his writings there are innumerable references to al-Qaida as the vanguard, and the force of groups like al-Qaida can, however, not be neglected⁶.

"The international brigade of jihad veterans, being outside the control of any state, was suddenly available to serve radical Islamist causes anywhere in the world [...] It bred a new hybrid Islamist ideology whose first doctrinal principle was to rationalize the existence and behavior of militants" (Kepel 2004: 219).

⁵ www.submission.org/suras/sura2.htm

⁶ The origin of the name al-Qaida and its literal meaning is not verified. There is evidence pointing in direction of it being a database file containing the names and contact information of Afghan Arab veterans for the sake of social benefits as bin Laden managed extensive relief efforts for the Arabs joining the Jihad in Afghanistan, hence the literal translation of al-Qaida: "the base". In this perspective al-Qaida as the name of bin Laden's terrorist group was "created" by American intelligence advisers to facilitate the prosecution of "these" individuals, i.e. if it could be proven that the alleged terrorists were members of an international terrorist organization they could i.a. be prosecuted according to existing organized crime laws. Azzam's own reference to al-Qaida seems however to contradict this theory, however in view of "al-Qaida's" most attentive attitude towards the media and "marketing strategies" it is possible that they began using the name "al-Qaida" after the American government had rendered them persona non grata.

Even though the conglomerate of individuals ascribing to the global-jihadi doctrine by far can be described as a homogenous group, this quote touches the core of what is known as jihadi-Salafism. Jihadi-Salafism is a collective term of the various militant groups advocating the use of jihad as a means to rearrange society as a mirror image of the *Golden Era* of the Prophet and his Companions.

The effectiveness of his reworked vanguard was further reinforced by his development of the concept of jihad, which is the single most important factor in Azzams doctrine. In his best-known booklet, *Defending the Land of the Muslims Is Each Man's Most Important Duty*, he, as the title clearly indicates, elevates jihad to become the greatest virtue of Islam. This signifies a clean break with traditional application, including the reformist Salafists'.

According to the reformists "several prior phases are necessary before a jihad is permissible" (Wiktorowiczq).

The first step is *tarbiya*, education and implies that prior to waging jihad the community should prepare itself by acquiring the proper Muslim practice to be spiritually prepared for the Jihad. The second step, *tasfiya*, purification coincide with what the Qur'an render the "Greater jihad": a personal inner struggle to become a better person, improve oneself and ones' society [my translation] (Rashid 2002: 138). It is thus imperative that prior to waging war, i.e jihad, the community of the Faithful is educated in the proper Salafi doctrine. One of the main incentives of these prior phases and for Islam per se is for the community to avoid *fitna*, i.e. dissension among the community of the Faithful, the Umma. Without this unity in faith prior to waging Jihad, Allah will not reward the Umma with victory.

As the reformist Salafists argue this rash into jihad clearly differs from the Prophet's application. Muhammad spent the first half of his mission calling people to Islam and teaching people the proper understanding of the Islamic faith, before fighting jihad. Contrary to the jihadi-Salafists, they regard the Afghan jihad a failure, due to the factional classes and disarray following the Soviets' withdrawal.

Opposing the thesis' perspective of the jihadi-Salafists instrumental use of Islam is the inherent traits of religion per se. I recognize the fact that the jihadi-Salafists' call for jihad can be justified with reference to both the doctrine of fard 'ayn and fard kifaya, the latter referring to the collective obligation of the Muslims for offensive attacks in enemy territories, the former to the individual obligation of fighting a defensive jihad to defend the Muslim territories when threatened by infidel forces. Whether or not the defensive or offensive jihad doctrine, or both, is applicable in the current situation, is subject to opinion. However, by rejecting the ulema's reserved right to issue fatwas legitimizing jihad and defying Islam's explicit rejection of rebellion against Muslim leaders he signifies a clean break with fundamental Islamic doctrines.

Jihad was not only an individual's obligation, but everyone capable of fighting jihad could do so without any authorization.

I thus find it adequate to assert that the jihadi-Salafists image of their ideology as the only legitimate, claiming to be following the model of the Prophet it is void of validity.

Section 6.3 and 7.3 on instrumental religion will discuss these matters further by assessing the apparent logical flaws in the jihadi-Salafi ideology further.

5. Reshaping the Islamist ideology

I will begin with the key events that set the stage for the growth of militant Islamism:

- **1967 - Israel defeats the Arabic armies in the Six Day War**

After this, Nasser offered to resign. In many ways this was the beginning, or the end, dependent on which camp you were in: the end if you were an Arab nationalist and the beginning if a radical Islamist. "[...] the 1967 defeat seriously undermined the ideological edifice of nationalism and

created a vacuum to be filled a few years later by Qutb's Islamist philosophy [...]" (Kepel 2004: 63).

- **1970s petro Islam** (Kepel 2004: 61)

During the 1970s Saudi-Arabia's position as the leading oil-producing country in the world boosted its capacity to spread its Wahhabi style Sunni Islam.

The 70s were also marked by a sudden emergence of militant Islamist movements throughout the Muslim world. Many of these were supported by the Saudi regime itself or Saudi based organizations i.a. the Muslim World League.

- **1973 the October War - Arab – Israeli war**

The preceding summer the Gamaat Islamiya was established on Egyptian campuses. The oil embargo following the war was a show of international force and resistance by the Saudi monarchy. In addition it boosted the cogency of their efforts to wahhabize Islam worldwide.

- **1979 USSR's invasion of Afghanistan**

Later to become the most renowned breeding ground and host country of terrorist training camps. This is arguably the single most important factor in the history of militant Islamism as it provided an environment where individuals with similar incentives and worldview were given the opportunity to exchange ideas and further develop their ideology. The actual combat experience they gained during the Afghan jihad has turned many of these individuals into highly-skilled militants, both as executives, instructors and architects of militant actions. Even though the withdrawal of the Soviet troops was due mostly to the native Afghan Mujahedeen, the Afghan Arabs came out with a boosted self-confidence. Their reputation and credibility throughout the Muslim world were exceedingly strengthened.

- **1987 Palestinian intifada**

The Palestinian resistance groups have very different incentives than the jihadi-Salafists. They are locally oriented and are generally categorized as nationalist-separatists and strive to distance themselves from the globally oriented jihadi-Salafists. The Salafists denote the fate of the Palestinian people as one of their main incentives.

- **Gulf war 1990-91**

Turning down the proposal set forth by Osama bin Laden and the Afghan veterans and letting non-Muslim troops onto the Arabian Peninsula marked the beginning of the decline of the Saudi monarchy in the eyes of the jihadi-Salafists. The severe resistance to non-Muslims on the Peninsula is ascribed to the words Muhammad supposedly said while dying: "Two religions shall not remain together on the peninsula of the Arabs". Even though other passages seem to refute this, i.a. by describing the rights and duties of non-Muslims living within Muslim territory, the jihadi-Salafists are championing this vigorously.

These events have been decisive in the propagation of the jihadi-Salafi ideology, and I find it adequate to separate them into two categories:

Enablers

- *Petro Islam*
- *USSR's invasion of Afghanistan*

Instigators

- *Six day- and October war*
- *The Palestinian intifada*
- *The Gulf war*

The *enablers* supplied the jihadi-Salafists with the financial and strategic resources they needed in order to develop and spread their ideology as well as a safe haven for their training camps.

Today the Saudi monarchy is a declared opponent of the jihadi-Salafists and a close ally of the USA in the war on terror. Substantial funds have however flowed from the Saudi oil fields in support of not only what today is known as jihadi-Salafism, but to a myriad of Islamist groups throughout the world.

Osama bin Laden started his career as a generous benefactor of the *mujahedeen* and Afghan Arabs during the Afghan war. The cash flow continues today, with or without bin Laden's funds and without the consent of the Saudi monarch.

After the September 11th attack on the USA, considerable efforts have been made to stop the funding of militant groups. Even though some progress has been made and key financiers have been identified this is a Sisyphean task:

“The committee [UN committee monitoring al-Qaida] noted that private donations to the group [al-Qaida] were continuing ‘largely unabated’. The FBI designated nine men as key terrorist financiers: seven Saudis, a Pakistani and an Egyptian. But to pick out individuals is ludicrous. The basis for the funding of modern Islamic terrorism, whether committed by individuals linked to bin Laden or any other group or acting on their own, is the sympathy felt among millions of Muslims worldwide. Stopping the activities of nine men will do nothing to stop the problem. [...] Since September 11th, donations to radical movements, all over the Islamic world, have substantially increased” (Burke 2003: 235-236).

The *instigators* represent the utmost humiliation of the Islamic world as a whole and the jihadi-Salafists per se. Refusing the assistance of bin Laden's Afghan veterans and letting infidel forces onto the Arabian Peninsula, represented a crossroads in the relationship between the Saudi establishment and the jihadi-Salafists. The jihadi-Salafists regarded this as a violation of the injunctions set

forth in the Qur'an and in their eyes it proved the Saudi hypocrisy. Cutting a long story short, these events cemented the jihadi-Salafists' notion of themselves as the only legitimate Islamic entity. Drawing on sections 7.2 and 7.3 it appears evident that these events have been vital in the development of the symbolic force of the jihadi-Salafist ideology.

From the Salafists' point of view the instigators confirm the notion that *straying away from the path of Allah is severely punished*; the cure is however straight forward: *resurrect the Caliphate and establish a society governed according to the Sha'ria*.

5.1 Socio-economic conditions

In line with i.a. Kepel, Burke and Hegghammer I view the jihadi-Salafist ideology as a movement for social change. Their declared aim is to restructure the society along the lines of Muhammad's early Umma. This is a society in which the law of God, al-Sha'ria, is the only source of legislation. Finally they will resurrect the Caliphate.

“By promising to re-establish social justice on the model of the first state of Islam set up by the Prophet Muhammad in Medina, the Islamists held out a vision of utopia. They also gave expression to the populace's visceral hostility towards regimes gnawed by corruption, bankruptcy (both economic and moral), and authoritarianism – [...]” (Kepel 2004: 6).

By 2005 we see that Iraq is a vital part of this struggle, Ayman al-Zawahiri, commonly referred to as al-Qaida's second in command, writes in a letter to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the assumed leader of the Iraqi resistance:

“[...] it is my humble opinion that the Jihad in Iraq requires several incremental goals: [...] Establish an Islamic authority or amirate [emirate],

then develop it and support it until it achieves the level of a caliphate- over as much territory as you can to spread its power in Iraq” (Zawahiri).

The psychological mechanisms and the process of symbolization addressed in the current project are induced by certain structural conditions. I will pursue the hypothesis presented in section 2, by examining general statistical data on the Middle East.

Anticipating the findings I will point to what is known as the *Tocqueville effect*: when conditions in a society improve, the desires and aspirations of its citizens also grow. In a society deficient of civil and political liberties and a low living standard, an improvement of any of these factors will increase the citizens’ aspirations beyond the actual improvements. Thus, as the means to satisfy these expectations are absent, the result is frustration and resentment.

Jason Burke points in direction of the Tocqueville effect when he asserts that it is:

“not [as the following statistical data substantiate] absolute deprivation that is the key, but the deprivation that follows a period of aspiration-raising relative prosperity” (Burke 2003: 245).

The following will further cement the notion of the Middle East as a viable area for the sustained growth of militant Islamism.

5.2 A fall from grace

The society created by Muhammad before his death in 632 expanded over the following centuries to become one of the largest and most influential empires the world has seen. Since its decline, arguably beginning with Napoleons invasion of Egypt in 1806 and culminating in 1926 with the dissolving of the Ottoman Empire and Atatürk’s abolishment of the Caliphate, the Muslim heartland has been lagging behind. Once the political and cultural beacon of the world, state of

affairs today are marked by serious lack of political and civil liberties and extreme differences in living standard. As asserted in section 4.3 ff. the radical Islamists ascribe this decline to the deviation from the injunctions set forth in the Qur'an. With reference to sections 6.1 and 7.1 I will assert that this development justifies the application of the mechanism *resentment caused by reversal of status hierarchies*.

5.3 Selected statistical data

The current section, based on the *Human Development Report 2005*, the *Arab Human Development Report 2004* commissioned by the United Nations Development Programme and Freedom House's annual survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties, *Freedom in the World 2005*, will substantiate the notion of the catalyzing effect of the prevailing structural conditions in the Middle East.

The *Tocqueville effect* is identified as a key element as the socio-economic conditions, the lack of human rights, civil- and political freedoms are reinforcing the frustration and resentment caused by unsatisfied aspirations. The statistical data show that the Arab states are facing serious challenges in all of these areas and the reading of the reports can not be described as anything less than dismal. Between 2000 and 2003 there was a marginal increase in the HDI index from 0,653 to 0,679. A thorough statistical analysis would reveal whether or not this increase is significant in any way and also what it is owed to. It might e.g. be due to an increased GDP as the general picture for the Arab states show that their HDI rank is relatively much lower than their GDP. Thus it might not represent anything else than increased oil revenues.

Cementing the notion of the ill governed Arab States are the fact that 32 million people, i.e. 12 percent of the population in 15 Arab states suffer from malnutrition; a number which increased by 6 million during the 1990s, most of whom were in Somalia and Iraq. In the Palestinian territories 58.1 percent of the population subsists below the poverty line (AHDR 2004), in Pakistan 65.6 percent has less than 2\$ a day to live by, and 32.6 percent subsists below the

national poverty line. The numbers for Egypt is not much more encouraging: 43.9 percent subsists on less than 2\$ a day and 16.7 percent of the population is below the national poverty line.

The educational system does neither provide any optimistic prospects for the future: 1/3rd. of the male- and 1/2 of the female Arab population are illiterate. In addition the education is generally of low quality failing to provide general capabilities or invest their pupils with the capacity of independent thinking. As the percentage of the population under age 15 is as high as 36.3, almost 5 percent higher than the total for the developing countries and close to 12 percent higher than that for the OECD countries, these challenges will only increase in the years to come.

Moving on to civil and political liberties the picture is even more discouraging: According to Freedom House's annual survey, by 2005, Turkey is the only country in the Middle East and North Africa rated free. The Arab states are thus topping the list of countries whose citizens enjoy the least freedom. The lack of freedom includes all aspects of society: restrictions on civil society organizations, the media and not to mention the absence of a fair political debate and elections. Popular participation is decreasing in the Arab States as such; human rights violations are continuously violated and have to some extent increased due to legislative acts inflicted by the so-called "War on Terror".

The Arab countries are further described as "Black-hole" states, (AHDR 2004) signifying that the elites and the existing bureaucratic apparatus are designed to preserve the prevailing societal structure: an extremely ill-balanced power structure where all power is vested in the executive body. The parliament, where it exists, does not represent the people but is rather another adjunct of the ruler. On top of this the executive controls the intelligence apparatus designed to preserve Status Quo.

"Yet careful scrutiny of developments in this period indicates that, overall, there has been no significant easing of the human development crisis in the Arab region. Certainly, incipient reforms are taking place in more than

one of the priority areas identified in this Report, but for the most part those reforms have been embryonic and fragmentary.” (HDR 2005)

6. Theoretical perspective

The project’s perspective is that aggregate social phenomena are a consequence of individual human action. This notion, known as methodological individualism, will be employed in order to examine the apparent attraction to the jihadi-Salafist ideology. Three perspectives will be applied: *psychological effects of structural conditions*, *the process of symbolization* and *the instrumental use of religion*. These mechanisms differ in proportion to how they influence individuals, but my hypothesis is that their end-results are the same: *a rally to the jihadi-Salafi ideology and an aversion towards “the West”*.

Section 2. ff. identifies psychological mechanism as a prerequisite for the other two mechanisms to be effective.

6.1 Psychological mechanisms

The psychological mechanisms addressed in the following analysis are divided into two main categories: hot- and cold processes (Elster 1993).

A *hot mechanism* is characterized by a subconscious process in which the end-result is an altered belief or desire. In Freud’s words one could say that the person is controlled by his superego that e.g. changes a person’s desire in such a way that they fit his opportunities. Put differently the alteration of the belief or desire serve a subconscious purpose. The outline below recognizes these purposes for each mechanism.

A *cold mechanism* is not as expedient as a hot-mechanism. It is marked by erroneous cognitive processing and the alteration does not serve a subconscious purpose. It can be likened to calculate $1 + 1 = 3$.

Adaptive preference formation

In psychological terms, this is described as *reduction of cognitive dissonance* or from La Fontaine's fable the *sour grapes syndrome*⁷. It is a subconscious causal process in which one's desires are adjusted to the perceived possibilities. It is provoked by a drive to reduce the frustration caused by having desires that can not be satisfied, i.e. cognitive dissonance. A person whose state of mind is marked by cognitive dissonance will subconsciously try to diminish this by changing his desires. Thus, it is a *hot-process*, in which the end-result is an altered desire.

The story of the 17-year-old Pakistani in section 2 describes a possible effect of this process: as the Pakistani adolescent never will be able to attain the standard of living and cultural traits of the 'westernized' world he might very well end up opposing these values and resort to the diametrically opposing teachings of jihadi-Salafism. In the following analysis I will substantiate that this mechanism, coupled with the process of symbolization is decisive in i.a. the process which render the "west" "the great Satan".

Wishful thinking

People engaged in wishful thinking adjust their beliefs about the world in accordance with their wants. Like the adaptive preference process this is a *hot-process*. They do, however, differ in regard of the end-result, which is a belief in the case of wishful thinking as opposed to a desire. If the fact that you are about to carry out a suicide-attack convinces you that martyrdom will bring you eternal

⁷ In one of his fables, La Fontaine describes a fox which is not able to reach the grapes. To escape the frustration it decides the grapes are sour.

life, it will be a case of wishful thinking. Bluntly, one could argue that religious belief per se is in fact a result of this process.

In the same way as people suffering under seemingly unbearable travails always seem to find a cause for their misery it is likely that the violent behavior of the Islamic militants can be retraced to wishful thinking: the militant behavior of the jihadi-Salafists is justified as the will of Allah.

Resentment caused by reversal of status hierarchies

Resentment is an emotion caused by *a belief* of injustice which induces a *desire* to reverse the status hierarchies. In a situation where a social group or population experience to be surpassed by another, the effect is resentment towards the new presiding social class. It is a *hot-process*: a certain belief about the world creates a desire to change the perceived conditions.

According to Petersen 2002 the feeling of resentment spurs different attitudes contingent on the political context it originates in; stable societies, in which political institutions are intact and well functioning, the occurrence of violence is unlikely as the institutions provides an outlet for the sense of subordination. In less functioning societies where these channels are not intact or there is a discrepancy between two groups in a society the outcome is more probable to be violent:

“Status reversal creates the highest intensity of resentment and produces the highest likelihood of *violent* conflict. Status reversal results when a more regionally powerful group in an established hierarchy is dislodged from its position and placed below a less powerful group” (Petersen 2002: 52).

Many eloquent works describe the decline of the Orient; among these are Lewis 2002 and Said 2003. A comparative perspective on the Middle-Eastern, Muslim-

Arab situation today, and the caliphates previous position as arguably the world's culturally and militarily superior power gives substantial evidence of the significance of this mechanism. Further, I will maintain that the creation of the state of Israel in 1948 has been decisive in this regard.

Inferential errors

These are “[...] defects in the cognitive apparatus” (Elster 1996: 26) which would be an academic twist to what is commonly known as lack of good judgment. As opposed to the earlier hot-processes this is a *cold-process* in which the result is an irrational *belief*. This mechanism is exemplified by the notion held by certain actors of the omnipotence of Israel and the cause of all evils. The people expressing these views argue on the other hand that this omnipotent power can be defeated (Elster 2004).

These psychological mechanisms distort a person's beliefs and desires and it is implied that they would be unacceptable to the subject if he were aware of them; on the other hand they might very well lend themselves to cultivation.

6.2 Symbolization

In the event of disturbing changes in a society and when populations experience traumatic incidents, two central effects are observed:

- ***Affects are released from their previous objects***
- ***People become more receptive to proposals***

In these situations several competing symbols emerge which all compete

"to serve as a foci of concentration for the aroused community" (Lasswell 1960:189).

The outcome of this process is the survival of a few master symbols with dichotomization as the final result:

"symbolization thus necessitates dichotomization" (Ibid:189).

Lasswell continues by rendering symbolization as a powerful factor in social development and for the purpose of propaganda.

My reading of the Lasswellian idealtype of the process of symbolization renders it autodynamic: the symbolization effect is triggered by structural conditions. In the forthcoming discussion it will however be asserted that this process is further utilized by the jihadi-Salafi ideologists.

With reference to section 4 ff. covering the ideological traits of Islamism in general and jihadi-Salafism per se, it is recognized that the competing symbols are:

- **Islam**

The jihadi-Salafists maintain an image of the immutable Islam. The Qur'an and its commandments are the only source of legislation and code of conduct.

- **the West**

The image of the decadent western society, its system of government and legislation represents the ultimate abuse of the Qur'anic commandments.

6.3 Instrumental Religion

Recognizing the fact that the vast majority of the Muslim population do not indulge in jihadi-Salafism, the perspective of this section will be that of a convenient exegesis and instrumental utilization of Islam. I will maintain this notion by rendering the radicalized edition of Islam as principally a means for societal change in line with communism, socialism and capitalism. Qutb found all of these inadequate.

Compared to other religions Islam is all encompassing as it regulates all aspects of society; thus it is also a potent instrument for social change. Qutb's application does however signify a clear break with traditional Muslim attitude towards politics which is characterized by resignation and patience. The focus has traditionally been on avoiding *fitna* i.e. disorder and dissension among the community of the faithful. As a consequence, the doctrine of *Takfir*, central in Qutb's radicalized edition of Islam, has been used reluctantly as he who confessed to be Muslim, was a Muslim. Their piety was only to be judged by God.

“The notion of professed Muslims lapsing into Jahiliyya and becoming legitimate targets of jihad represents a bold reworking of Islamic political thought” (Brown 2000: 158).

Qutb's reworking of the term Jahiliyya cleared the way for an Islamic justification of the militant resistance towards the nationalist elites in 1960s Egypt. As the Qur'an explicitly forbids rebellion against any Muslim ruler, this consequently appears to be void of Islamic legitimacy. Contradicting this notion is the fact that all aspects of faith is subject to exegesis: in order to bypass this doctrine the jihadi-Salafists render the Muslim regimes they oppose as un-Islamic.

I will return to these questions in subsequent sections, for now I will confine to assert that this is another logical defect of the jihadi-Salafi ideology.

In recent years the jihadi-Salafists has readily applied this logic. In addition to being a bold reworking of the justification of Jihad, it arguably redefines the very notion of Jihad:

“primarily [jihad] is a personal inner struggle to become a better person, improve oneself and help her or his society [my translation]”(Rashid 2002: 138).

Referring to section 4.3 ff. this coincides with the several phases which are necessary before a jihad is permissible. Thus, it seems adequate to maintain the notion of the convenient exegesis of the jihadi-Salafists.

The following figure will serve to illustrate the ideological logic behind the radicalized concept of jihad:

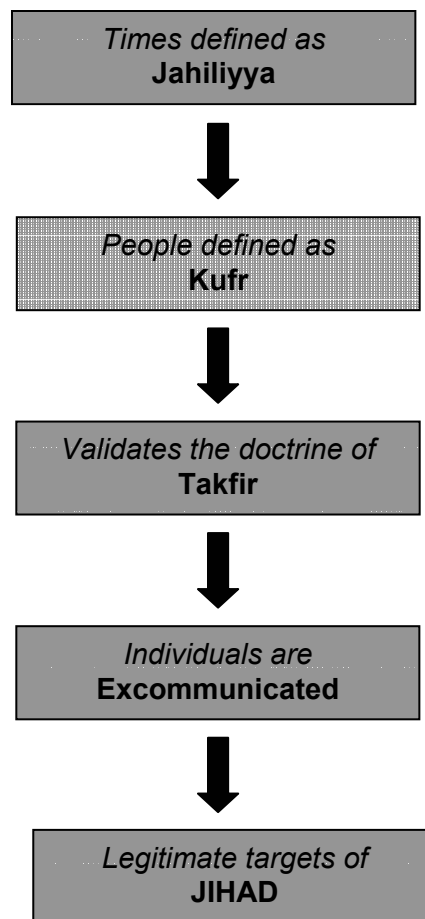


Figure 6.1 Ideological logic of jihad

This illustrates the legacy of Qutb: *a radical interpretation of central Islamic concepts*. It represents a clean break and a radical revision of the traditional Islamic application summarized in the following table:

Table 6.1 Traditional vs. radical application

| | Traditional | Radicalized |
|--|---|---|
| Jahiliyya | Impious, barbaric historical period before the Islamic revelation | Qutb's own times – also today |
| Kufr | An impious, non- Muslim. Judgment made by God. | All not following Qutb's command |
| Takfir | A doctrine pronounced by alims Reluctantly used | Pronounced by Qutb – not an alim Applied universally |
| Rebellion against Muslim rulers | Prohibited | Permitted |

The jihadi-Salafists extensive use of suicide bombers, the justification of these actions and the rendering of these as martyrs represents yet another bold reworking of the Islamic tradition. It differs from conventional Islamic practice on two crucial points:

- 1. Suicide is regarded a sin and thus prohibited, he who commits suicide will not be salvaged.***

2. A Martyr is by definition one who sacrifices his life defending the name of Allah, i.e. killed by infidels.

When the jihadi-Salafists sanction the use of suicide attacks as the will of Allah, this is due to another convenient exegesis: as it is an attack aimed at killing infidels and thus defending the Muslim heartland they “disregard” the fact that the martyrs cause their own deaths. It might be due to tactical considerations and pragmatism. The jihadi-Salafists limited resources and manpower restrict the damage they can cause by means of conventional tactics. Further, it can be argued that due to the enemy’s superiority, all attacks are possible suicidal. Instead of facing the inevitable death by enemy fire, the effect of their attack is increased by blowing themselves up.

I find it adequate to offer the following conclusions:

- 1. As the suicide attackers by definition commit suicide they violate the Qur’anic commands.**
- 2. Thus, when jihadi-Salafists promise martyrdom to their potential suicide bombers this is void of Islamic legitimacy. According to Bernhard Lewis “Der Koran kennt keine Selbstmordattentate” (Die Zeit 2004).**

This concludes the theoretical perspective which will be employed in the following discussion, section 7 ff.

Recapitulating the main features, I will assert that the psychological mechanisms *adaptive preference formation, wishful thinking, resentment, inferential errors* as well as the *process of symbolization* makes an individual receptive to the jihadi-Salafi ideology.

It is argued that the process of symbolization can be found in two different editions: the Lasswellian idealtype triggered by structural conditions and one

fuelled by the jihadi-Salafi ideologists. A consequence is that this mechanism can be effective at all three stages illustrated in figure 6.2 below:

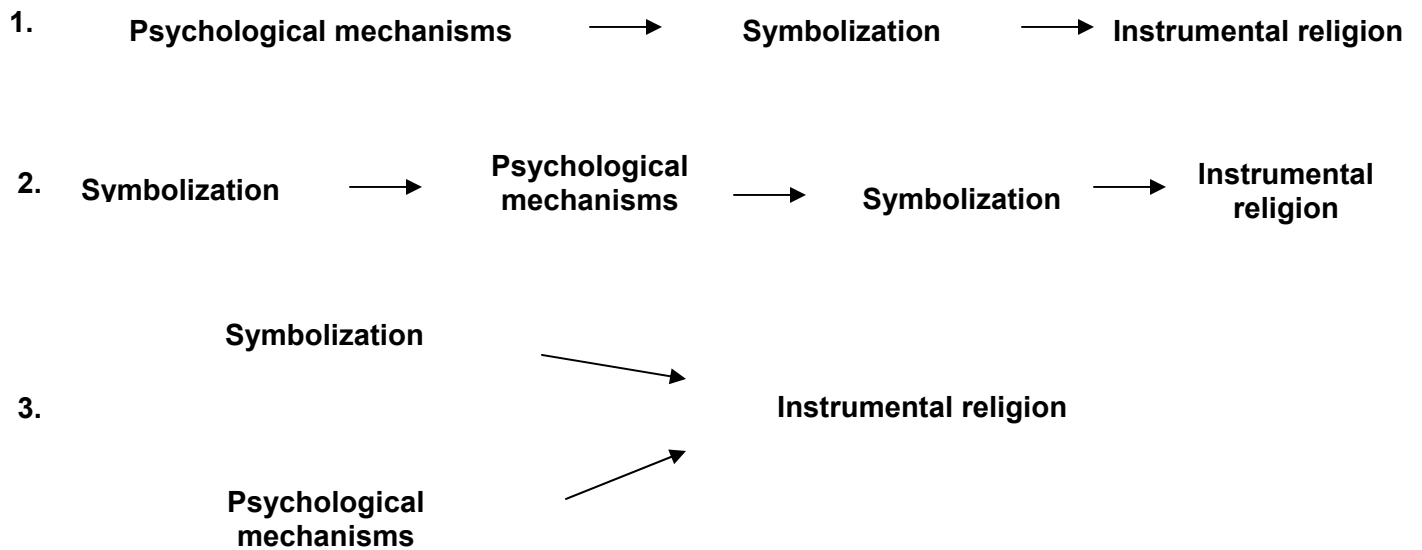


Figure 6.2 Process relation

This is a provisional, ideal type figure. As both Psychological mechanisms and the process of symbolization are triggered by socio-economic factors, it is probable that they affect individuals simultaneously; thus version 3 might be the most accurate description of the topical process. The dual mode of the process of symbolization do, however, point in direction of version 2, i.e. the second time it appears it is instrumentally utilized. As this do not affect the outcome of the process: *making people receptive to the jihadi-Salafi ideology*, I will not discuss the internal relation of the processes further.

7. Mechanisms in context

The following discussion is subject to the following conditions:

1. As section 4 ff. states, the jihadi-Salafi ideology championed by i.a. Azzam and further advanced by Osama bin Laden and Ayman al-Zawahiri is considered a bold reworking of the Islamic legacy, enabling it to serve a *distinct political purpose*.
2. *People* in the topical question, refers to persons who are *ideologically committed* to the jihadi-Salafi ideology. It includes, but is not limited to, individuals who have sworn loyalty to Osama bin Laden.

The project considers mechanisms triggered by socio-economic factors which thus have the potential of affecting the entire population. The character traits which predispose some individuals while others are left unaffected are not identified. It is however assumed that an in-depth personality assessment would reveal individuals who are i.a. *socially committed, have a strong sense of justice and religiously convinced*. Further, the findings in the work of i.a. Sageman (2004) establish the significance of social networks and relations when people accept the jihadi-Salafists' call for jihad.

7.1 Psychological mechanisms

As I hold it probable that the *psychological mechanisms* prepare the ground for the other agents, I will deal with these first.

- *What role do psychological mechanisms play in making people receptive to the jihadi-Salafi ideology?*

The psychological mechanisms considered in this project are *resentment caused by reversal of status hierarchies, adaptive preference formation, wishful thinking and inferential errors*.

Resentment caused by reversal of status hierarchies

As the Jihadi-Salafi ideology and its followers target the "West", the following discussion is limited to the relation between the 'West' and the Muslim-Arab world.

There is substantial evidence supporting the validity of the resentment mechanism; I hold general socio-economic factors and the foundation of the Israeli state as the two most important factors. As the limits of this project prevent a further exploration regarding the foundation of the state of Israel, I will confine to assert that it altered the situation for the population living in the area today known as Israel and the Occupied Territories. Recognizing the fact that acts of injustice has been rampant on both sides, I will confine to state that the current situation is characterized by overwhelming Israeli superiority. The status hierarchies are reversed. The reason why the feeling of resentment is collectively applicable to the entire Arab-Muslim world is due to the fact that the area is of great religious importance and the European powers' unjust behavior towards the Arab world in the prelude and aftermath of the 1st. World War; manifested through i.a. the Sykes-Picot Agreement.

The following quote of the Tunisian Islamist militant Nizar Trabelsi substantiates the notion of the fate of the Palestinian people is an inducement for individuals with no apparent personal relations to Palestine.

"The plan was that I would break through the gates at the Kleine Brogel army base in a Mercedes delivery van carrying a 100-kilogram bomb and crash into the canteen. It would happen between 12:00 and 13:00.

Between 50 and 70 American soldiers would be eating there at that time. I

would place a photo of a Palestinian child killed by the Jews on the van's dashboard to remind myself of why I was doing it" (Nesser 2004: 9).

With reference to the sections covering the socio-economic conditions in the Middle-East, I find it appropriate to assert that the application of the resentment mechanism is justified. This mechanism has two possible outlets, (refer section 6.1) and I will maintain that the political situation in the Arab-Muslim world incite violent behavior. Historically, Islamist insurgencies and Islamist movements have been suppressed by the mainly nationalist elites throughout the Arab-Muslim world. Their access to political forums, where these are present, has not improved significantly. The ongoing elections in Egypt (December 2005) does however show that large constituencies are sympathizing with the Islamists as independent representatives with ties to the still illegal Muslim Brotherhood have received a large number of votes. By banning the Islamists as a whole from the political scene there is a significant risk that the radical fringes of the Islamist movements will withdraw from society and resort to violence. The jihadi-Salafi branch of the Islamist movements is certainly a clear indication of this process. In short, the effect of this mechanism can be summarized as follows:

- 1. The reversal of status hierarchies creates a belief of injustice which thus accordingly causes a feeling of resentment***
- 2. A desire to change the perceived injustice arises***
- 3. Due to the lack of political channels the change is pursued by means of violence***

Adaptive preference formation

This mechanism covers what is also known as the Sour Grapes Syndrome; its operation is justified by the following:

- 1. Compared to the western, the Arab-Muslim population is facing serious challenges in their everyday life**
- 2. Through modern media and communications systems impressions of western and most notably American culture and way of life is delivered throughout the Arab-Muslim world**

Before I continue, I find it necessary to stress that the justification of the current mechanism by no means rest on cultural chauvinism. It is not a question of ranking cultures, but rather an objective assessment of the opportunities given each person dependent on their birthplace.

A key element besides measurable factors such as i.a. infant mortality rates, life expectancy rates and illiteracy is *freedom of choice*. The majority of the inhabitants in western societies have a set of opportunities which they have a reasonable chance of getting fulfilled. Due to the socio-economic and political situation in the Arab-Muslim world, the vast majority of the population in this area has aspirations which are not satisfied. Even though the image of the “West” as depicted by the media is not consistent with reality, this is of minor importance as people with firsthand experiences of the indigent in western societies are scarce.

A prerequisite for the application of this mechanism assume the recognition that *all people desire the freedom of choice*; including, but not limited to: education, occupation, way of life, recreational activities, place of residence etc. The common denominator for all these factors is capital. Aware of the fact that many of the regimes in the Arab-Muslim world are both repressive and authoritarian limiting civil liberties as a whole, one cannot disregard the fact that if all the regimes in this region were transformed into liberal electoral democracies it would not change the fact that the vast majority of the population in these states nevertheless would lack the funds needed to choose their desired way of life. Thus, as the 17-year-old Pakistani described in section 2 realizes he will never obtain the standard of living and freedom of choice enjoyed in western societies

he is very likely to react as the fox in La Fontaine's fable and render it undesirable. If he does not, provided he has desires that are not satisfied, he would find himself in a state of *cognitive dissonance*.

In this setting the jihadi-Salafists do not only champion a diametrically opposing belief and value system with a strong aversion towards the impious and decadent western societies, but also invest him with pride - if he chooses to accept their ideology and actions, as they constitute the spear point in the resistance against western influence.

I will thus conclude that the application of the *sour grapes syndrome* is justified in the process of making people receptive to the jihadi-Salafi ideology.

Wishful thinking

This mechanism incorporates religious belief. In previous chapters I have suggested that religious belief per se is a case of wishful thinking. This will be further pursued and elaborated in the following. Before I continue, I find it necessary to give a few remarks regarding religious belief and socio-economic conditions.

Most people in the third world are religious believers (Haynes 1998: 15). From the 1980s and onward there has been a growth of religio-political movements. Haynes (1998) holds the following factors as decisive in the understanding of what he describes as a *return to religion*:

- **inconclusive – unsatisfactory modernization**
- **disillusionment with secular nationalism**
- **problems of state legitimacy**
- **political oppression – incomplete national identity**

- **socio-economic grievances**
- **perceived erosion of traditional morality and values**

These factors concur with the situation in the Arab Muslim world. It indicates that the growth of religio-political movements, including the jihadi-Salafi, is due to certain socio-economic factors.

The mechanism of *wishful thinking* fulfills two purposes in the process of making people receptive to the jihadi-Salafi ideology:

- 1. It justifies behavior which by universal ethical and moral standards is unacceptable***
- 2. It reverses the gain-loss ratio in such a way that dying takes precedence of living***

The actions advocated and performed by the jihadi-Salafists are of an extreme character. Some of their acts will be justified through the principles of *ius in bello* and *ius ad bellum*. In the minds of the jihadi-Salafists this is however insignificant as their actions are justified by Allah. By rendering their actions as divinely ordained they effectively exempts them from any other criticism. This is by no means a distinct feature of the Islamic faith, as both Judaism and Christianity have a long tradition of justifying atrocities as the will of God. The mechanism of wishful thinking is a “hot-process”: people adjust their beliefs i.e. that violence is divinely ordained, according to their wants i.e. a society governed according to the law of God, *al-Sha’ria*.

The second purpose this mechanism might fulfill is reversing the gain-loss ratio. A person influenced by this mechanism, will feel that his earthly life has no value as he is convinced that eternal life awaits him in the next. This effect is most evidently observed with, but not limited to, those selected for martyrdom

operations. The force of this mechanism is unprecedented, as it will make people unaffected the risk of being killed, to the extent that they will have a *desire* to be killed.

“They fought all day when I went to relieve them in the evening the Arabs were crying because they wanted to be martyred. They were saying, “I must have committed some sin for Allah has not chosen me to go to heaven.” I told them that if they wanted to stay.... And fight then I wasn’t going to stop them. The next day they were killed. Osama said later that he had told them that the trench was their gate to heaven”(Burke 2004: 76).

Inferential errors

The last psychological mechanism to be addressed is inferential errors. In section 6.1 I referred to Elster’s observation of the contradiction in on the one hand refer to Israel as an omnipotent state and on the other claim that this power can be defeated. I will further assert that when the jihadi-Salafists ascribe the decline of the Arab-Muslim world to the apostasy of the nationalist leaders and claim that by *returning to the true path of Islam*, the Arab-Muslim world will regain its position, it is another case of defective cognitive processing.

The effects of these inferential errors are twofold:

- 1. It cements the notion of Israel and thus its allies as the cause of all evils, not only the fate of the Palestinian people, but rather an all-inclusive conspiracy theory which holds Israel responsible for the entire world’s misery.***
- 2. Islam and more notably the jihadi-Salafi ideology are projected as the only legitimate model of social order.***

These inferential errors produce irrational beliefs; *it simplifies both the cause and solution to the challenges the Arab-Muslim world are facing*. This said, I recognize the possibility of these assertions being part of the jihadi-Salafi propaganda toolbox i.e. they are deliberately created and promoted in order to further their agenda.

7.2 The process of symbolization

"The individual who is sorely divided against himself may seek peace by unifying himself against an outsider" (Lasswell 1960: 193-194).

Contrary to what present day militant Islamists assert, they are *rewriting* the past, not recovering it. They uphold an image of the *Golden Era*, denoting the historical period when Muhammad walked the earth as the ideal social system. In extension of this lies the notion of the immutable Islam and additionally, their desire to reintroduce al-Sha'ria as the only source of legislation.

"[...] there is, has been, and always will be only one true Islam, valid "for all time and place" (li kull makran wa zaman)" (Brown 2000: 2).

This is the mantra of the radical Islamists, and the basis of their glorification of the times of the Prophet and his Companions. This notion is, however, no more than "an oft-cited slogan that has rather convincingly been shown to have been coined no earlier than the late nineteenth century." (Ibid: 181 note 4).

Opposing the Islamists view of the immutable Islam, there is extensive literature pointing to its dynamic history⁸ (Brown 2000: Rashid 2002: Lewis 2002: etc.).

"[.....] classical Islamic culture adjusted to its environment by producing a powerful but limited government. The very durability and dynamism of the

⁸ As section 4.4 establishes the next of kin of the jihadi-Salafists, the reformist Salafists claim that the jihadi-Salafists does not follow the ideal of the Prophet as his first priority was to reach unity in faith *before* waging jihad.

classical Islamic synthesis attests to the strength of the choices made (Brown 2000: 67).⁹

Previous sections have shown that psychological mechanisms are effective in the process of making people receptive to the jihadi-Salafi ideology. In section 7.1 it is substantiated that i.a. the mechanism of adaptive preference formation is operative in the process of making people aversive towards the “West”. I will conceptualize this notion further through the application of Harold D. Lasswell’s theory of the process of symbolization. Two perspectives will be explored:

The Lasswellian idealtype of the process

This version is autodynamic, i.e. triggered by socio-economic- and political factors. I intend to examine how and to what extent the process of symbolization has been effective in the emergence of the jihadi-Salafists deep aversion towards the “West”. Seeing that Sayyid Qutb is the most significant contributor to their range of ideas, I will initiate the discussion with an assessment of the conditions in which Qutb developed his ideas, i.e. 1960s Egypt.

The propagandistic version

Resting on the fact that Lasswell rendered the process of symbolization as both a powerful factor in social development and for the purpose of propaganda I will substantiate that many of the inherent traits of the jihadi-Salafi ideology is deliberately developed in order to create an abyss between “Islam” and the “West”. This version of the process is closely connected with the mechanisms of the instrumental utilization of Islam.

⁹ The fate of the Jews in Europe from the 7th century onwards illustrates this point; in Christian Europe they were severely persecuted and oppressed, in the Muslim territories however they profited from a prosperous cooperation and extensive trade, Jews were also employed within the state bureaucracy.

Recapitulating the process, it is recognized that the triggering factors are:

- 1. Disturbing changes in society**
- 2. Populations experiencing traumas**

The effect of these factors will thus be:

- 1. Affects are released from their previous objects**
- 2. Symbols compete to serve as foci of concentration**
- 3. Survival of a few mastersymbols**
- 4. Dichotomization**

Today's jihadi-Salafists are descendants of a long line of radical Islamist reform movements (refer section 4). Even though traceable back to the Wahhabi tradition and Ibn al Taymiyya in medieval Saudi-Arabia, their primary source of inspiration is the Egyptian Muslim Brother, Sayyid Qutb, who exerted himself to create an abyss between his band of followers and the Egyptian nationalist elites. This was done by labeling his own times as Jahiliyya and everyone else, except his band of followers, as kufr.

The impetus of Qutb's work was socio-economical grievances, including the dissolution of the Caliphate, the foundation of the state of Israel and hence the reversal of status hierarchies. Throughout the Muslim-Arab world nationalist regimes had succeeded the European colonial powers, but were unable to address the socio-economical challenges and were void of credibility.

Qutb's message and solution was straightforward: rearrange society according to the injunctions set forth in the Qur'an. The cogency and persuasive force of his

ideas rests on the fact that it strikes the very heart of the collective Muslim-Arab identity; all that is good and just became vested in the symbol of Islam, while the nationalist elites became the symbol of everything evil and unjust.

Due to the unresolved socio-economic grievances and lack of freedom in the Middle-East, these sentiments have been latent in the Arab-Muslim population ever since. With varying force and credibility they have emerged to the surface manifested through Islamist insurgencies.

Today the jihadi-Salafists are the most vigorous advocates of these sentiments, their scope is however much wider than that of Qutb's. As they consider the Arab-Muslim states as puppet regimes controlled by the west, they have shifted their focus from the "Lesser evil" onto the "Greater Evil", denoting their domestic regimes and the "west" respectively.

Moving on to the possible instrumental utilization of the process I will assert that this is most evident in their reference to the Golden Era of Islam, refer section 4 for an elaboration of this notion. The consequences of this range of thoughts are far reaching as it paves the way for the concept of the immutable Islam and thus their desire for creating a society governed according to the al-Sha'ria. It is possibly a deliberate strategy aimed to coerce Muslims into accepting the jihadi-Salafists' range of ideas. The success and cogency of this strategy rests on the fact that those affected by it will feel that by dismissing the notion of the Golden Era and its implications, they are dismissing the very heart of the Islamic legacy. The implications of the topical process can be summarized as follows:

- 1. By upholding the medieval society of Muhammad as the only legitimate social system, the process of symbolization, whether autodynamic or instrumental, cements the jihadi-Salafists dogmatic belief of the excellence of Muhammad's Umma.**
- 2. Exploiting the collective Arab-Muslim culture, identity and heritage, they aim at presenting their ideology as the only true Islamic and**

thus repel all other social systems and ideologies, whether temporal or spiritual.

7.3 Instrumental utilization of Islam

Resting on section 4 I will discuss the notion of the jihadi-Salafists exploiting Islam in order to further their political agenda.

Possibly limited to the revelationist religions Judaism, Christianity and Islam, this is by no means a new approach towards religion; it is rather the rule than the exception. As keepers and administrators of the will of God the clergy have had and still have a tremendous influence on the vast majority of the worlds' population. By abusing their position as spiritual guides they have unsurpassed opportunities of directing, possibly coercing people into irrational behavior.

In figure 6.2 *Process Relation* I suggested three possible versions, all of which placed *the Instrumental use of religion* last in the chain. Previous sections have established that the socio-economic conditions in the Arab-Muslim world predispose people towards the sentiments of the jihadi-Salafists. Exposed to the Jihadi-Salafi ideology they are thus more inclined to accept its radical interpretations and take part in their extremist behavior.

My main focus is on their radicalized concept of jihad as this legitimizes their militant behavior. As illustrated in figure 6.1 *The ideological logic of jihad* and table 6.1 *Traditional vs. radical application*, the jihadi-Salafists' attitude towards the concept of jihad display the inconsistencies within their ideology and hence the instrumental utilization with all possible clarity. I substantiate this notion with reference to the following facts:

The jihadi-Salafists claim that their version of Islam is the only legitimate, 'pure' version - untampered by exegesis. As section 4.3 ff. points out, the following do however indicate instrumental utilization:

1. The reworking of the term *Jahiliyya*

2. Defining fellow Muslims as *kufr*

3. The use of suicide attackers and the labeling of these as martyrs

The preceding sections have substantiated that both psychological mechanisms and the process of symbolization are effective in the process of making Muslims in the Middle-East receptive to the jihadi-Salafi ideology and their incentives. I.e. they have adapted to and accepted the Salafists' dogmatic worldview. As denoted previously, I hold these two mechanisms to be vital i.a. in the process of making people antagonistic towards the west and what is regarded as corrupt and impious Muslim regimes. However, when explaining the militant behavior of the jihadi-Salafists it is necessary to include their instrumental utilization of religion.

The implications of their reworking of the concept and justification of jihad can be summarized as follows:

1. By rendering their cause and actions as religiously ordained, they are, in the eyes of the believer, not only effectively eluding universally ethical and normative principles, but transforming them into a religious imperative. Consequently, a person who neglects to abide by the jihadi-Salafi ideology is defying the will of Allah.
2. Fighting in the name of Allah to further his commandments is an unsurpassed morale booster. The determination of a person who is fighting a battle on the grounds of religious inducements will be unparalleled. This notion rests on the fact that it reverses the gain-loss ratio in such a way that the person will feel that he has more to lose by not risking his life in combat, i.e. face the consequences of rejecting the

will of Allah. The specific case of suicide missions pins down this irrational logic even further:

The acceptance of a suicide mission does not only imply that the gain-loss ratio is reversed, but a prohibited action is turned into an imperative.

7.4 Implications

Based on the previous discussion, it is justified that the agents covered are vital in the understanding of the gravitation towards jihadi-Salafism.

It appears evident that the socio-economic conditions in the Arab-Muslim world predispose individuals to the radical Salafi ideology. The applied psychological mechanisms hold the capacity of distorting a person's beliefs and desires in such a way as to render them irrational. It is also substantiated that the autodynamic version of the process of symbolization is an appropriate approach when assessing the extreme aversion towards the "West". Both of these mechanisms are triggered by socio-economic factors, and one should expect to find variants of these in societies marked by restrictions on the civil and political liberties and socio-economic grievances.

In the Middle-East however, these mechanisms do not only make people susceptible to the jihadi-Salafi ideology, but as the effects of the mechanisms coincide with the incentives of the Salafi ideology they also justify their existence. In this situation, the Salafists' instrumental utilization of Islam is exploiting the collective Arab-Muslim heritage; making all Muslims hostage to their radical amendments. By virtue of championing their ideology as the only legitimate and true Islamic, utilizing the deficient socio-economic conditions and promoting their universal magic of the Golden Era paradigm:

the cause of the collective Muslim misfortune is due to their straying away from the "right path", the remedial measure is to rearrange society

according to the first Muslim society established by Muhammad in Medina in 632.

As previously discussed the implications of this policy are far-reaching and will inevitably produce an authoritarian theocracy. The force of the jihadi-Salafists' method, as touched upon previously, is vested in the fact that all devout Muslims will need to assess their exegesis. It is a possibility that the jihadi-Salafi ideology represent the true will of Allah, if so, not acting according to the jihadi-Salafi ideology will imply defying the word of God.

Consequently, as the prevailing structural conditions have the potential for making people receptive to the jihadi-Salafi ideology, their reworking of traditional Islamic concepts and by rendering their policies as Godly ordained they have created an opinion-forming instrument of unprecedented force.

8.0 Closing remarks

I set out to map possible mechanisms leading people into jihadi-Salafism. The focus has been on three different, but interconnected mechanisms: various psychological mechanism, the process of symbolization and the instrumental utilization of religion. The gravitation towards jihadi-Salafism has been viewed through the grid of rational choice theory, and even though no definitive conclusions have been made, it has been substantiated that the socio-economic situation in the Arab-Muslim world hold the capacity of distorting a persons beliefs and desires in such a way as to make him susceptible to the jihadi-Salafi ideology. In order to positively identify the psychological mechanisms as triggering factors one would have to carry out in-depth psychological interviews¹⁰ of individuals ascribing to the Salafi ideology. The probability of finding appropriate interviewees seems, however, minimal as the circumstances under which the detainees are held in "western" captivity is most unsuited for viable

¹⁰ Recent exposures of the fallibility of court-appointed psychological experts do however render such activities uncertain; psychology is heavily dependent on cognitive processing and will thus remain a science exempt of absolutes.

psychological examinations. I have moreover deliberately avoided “Real Politik incentives”, e.g. the demands set forth in Osama bin Laden’s *Declaration of War against the Americans Occupying the Land of the Two Holy Places*, the jihadi-Salafists recurring reference to the dubious, inconsequent, hypocritical western powers and the ongoing human rights violations performed by the state of Israel, which are indisputable. According to the jihadi-Salafists, these acts justify the application of the defensive jihadi doctrine: Islamic territories are attacked by infidel forces, thus Allah require all who is capable to partake in the jihad. The extremism of the jihadi-Salafists’ actions, including idealized suicide and the Godly ordained killing of civilians, as well as the writer’s conviction that violent behavior per se is irrational, necessitates the notion of psychological mechanisms as conditioning the *Instrumental use of Religion* and the *Process of Symbolization*. Although the mechanisms included by no means paint the whole picture I find it to be a viable framework and conceptualization for understanding why Muslims in the Middle-East are receptive to the jihadi-Salafi ideology.

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